

Eastern Community Meeting
February 4, 2009
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
Discussion Leader: Jason Crawford & Charity Fesler

The notes below reflect our effort to summarize the comments, questions and concerns expressed at each meeting. They are not recorded verbatim and should not be considered direct quotations.

Overview: The crowd was adverse to the structure of the discussion presented. They wanted the community forum to be changed in a way that allowed for more input and dialog and didn't conform to a pre-decided structure. The discussion was free-form and didn't follow the planned structure. Community members wanted to reorganize the restructuring process. The community wants to be involved and informed. There were many concerns about last summer's plan to not take 9th graders and its effects on academics, extra curricular activities, and the overall culture of the school. Community members are concerned that the population of the school will decline. The group was also very offended by the presentation that showed "how do you want Eastern students to be described in 2012." They felt that those words describe how students are now.

Attendance:

6 Parents
3 Community Advocates
3 Students
12 Alumni

Notes:

Issue	Comments
Words to describe Eastern students in 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Intelligent;- Proud;- Dedicated to their education;- Ready to compete;- Excited about the prospect of learning;- Interested in getting an education;- Preparing for the future;- Ready to achieve.
Process of tonight's community meeting and the Eastern reform process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- People want to know how the data collected will be used to make decisions.- There were concerns that breaking out into small groups does not constitute a "community meeting." People feel that decisions have already been made and there is no transparency. Community members want to know what their roles are in this process moving forward.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Someone was concerned that the school is being closed in June. - Someone expressed that there are a lot of rumors floating around, but not many facts. Feels trust between the community and DCPS has been lost. - DCPS needs to provide the baseline decisions up front on what has already been decided. - Instead of using the discussion questions as a framework, it was recommended that we solicit what questions the community has because they tend to be more relevant. - The community members want involvement in every aspect of the rebuilding process. - There were concerns that there has been no consultation with the DC Council or with the religious community on this process. - Community members need to know where information on decisions will be posted (internet, newspaper, etc). - Someone expressed concerns about the “heavy-handed” way that the Chancellor has made decisions pertaining to Eastern. Feels the focus needs to be on the students and the current enrollment. - Someone expressed concerns that attention is only being paid to modernizing schools because of the changing demographics of DC. They were also upset that their daughter could not attend Eastern and is now at Woodson where there are classes with up to 40 students in them. - Someone expressed appreciation for Principal Chiselom for turning around the school since his arrival. - Someone felt that calling the school system “broken” hurts morale.
Facilities Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were concerns that the Eastern building is in poor shape currently. Feels money from the stadium or from the lottery should be earmarked for school facilities repair.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were concerns that no one is paying attention to the current facilities needs (including a broken window in the classroom).
Grade Configuration and Phase-out process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There were concerns about 9th graders not being able to attend. Someone asked if students who do not start at Eastern as a 9th grader will be able to transfer into the school as 10th or 11th grader. - People feel the reform process is disrupting school and that students should not be barred from participating. There were also concerns about enrollment numbers and the 9th graders who were supposed to go here but are “suffering” at other schools. This has disrupted the continuity of middle to high school. - Someone requested the Chancellor’s response to the restructuring plan that preceded the decision to not accept incoming 9th graders. - Someone asked if there is no 10th grade, how will DC-CAS testing occur?
Rigor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All agree that the curriculum needs to be more rigorous and more relevant to the computer generation.
Students’ perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A current Eastern student felt insulted about the question asking how to describe students in 2012. Feels that the phasing out is affecting them now and that the major problem facing Eastern is the infrastructure. Feels Eastern has a wonderful principal who has turned the school around (students go to class, actually want to learn, and have opinions about other things other than hip hop and fashion). Feels the entire student body has been silenced and that people are asking alumni, parents, and teachers but not enough students. - Student explained that Eastern already has a health academy, a law program, and extracurricular activities. They are satisfied and feel the biggest issue is the infrastructure (broken windows, no heat, leaking ceilings, and health risks).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student was upset that the lack of 9th graders has resulted in the school not having a football team. Said they cannot use the football field and that the school needs more books and computers.
Boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Someone asked whether or not the boundaries for Eastern are going to be re-drawn and specifically, will it still include parts of Ward 7.
Academy structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Someone felt this question was offensive since the decision has already been made. - Someone suggested creating an Aviation Academy (FAA).